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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**MUNCIE RESIDENTS SENTENCED
IN REAL ESTATE FRAUD**

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that Cindy Hickey, 46, and Bruce McLaren, 53, of Delaware County, Indiana, were sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Barker following their guilty pleas to wire fraud. This case was the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Winfield D. Ong, who prosecuted the case for the government, Judge Barker imposed a sentence of 10 months on each defendant, to be served as five months incarceration and five months home detention. The judge also ordered each to serve two years in supervised release and restitution in the amount of \$314,660.

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Their scheme involved approximately 25 properties and operated from 1998 to July 2001. Cindy Hickey and Bruce McLaren bought very low cost residential property in Muncie and sold the property, usually within just three to four weeks, at fraudulently inflated prices to buyers who had little or no assets, and thus had little to lose by agreeing to buy the property. Hickey and McLaren provided mortgage lenders false information about the buyers' assets in order to get the buyers to qualify for mortgages. Cindy Hickey, a licensed real estate agent and mortgage broker, principally found purchasers for the properties and concocted mortgage applications getting them qualified for mortgages. McLaren found and purchased the properties, and provided the down payments to the purchasers in the guise of second mortgages which were invariably forgiven, or never collected. Most of these properties went into foreclosure and the purchasers were evicted.

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